

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SAIGON 12814 170139Z

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-12 OMB-01 DPW-01 AID-20 IO-13 RSR-01 /141 W

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R 161335Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4676

INFO AMEXBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

USDEL JEC FRANCE

DAO SAIGON

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

CINCPAC

COMUSSAG

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, VS

SUBJECT: ICCS: CANDEL PRESS CONFERENCE FOR RELEASED CANADIAN OFFICER

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

REF: SAIGON 12718

SUMMARY: PRESS CONFERENCE HELD JULY 16 BY ICCS CANDEL WITH
PARTICIPATION OF RELEASED OFFICERS, CANDEL AMBASSADOR, AND
SENIOR CANDEL OFFICER ON THE RESCUE PARTY, TURNED OUT TO BE A
NON-EMTOTIONAL RECITAL COVERING CAPTURE, 18 DAYS OF CAPTIVITY
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PAGE 02 SAIGON 12814 170139Z

AND RELEASE TO TWO OFFICERS. END SUMMARY.

1. THE TWO OFFICERS CHARACTERIZED THEIR GENERAL TREATMENT AS RELATIVELY HUMANE BUT DID HAVE SOME COMPLAINTS ABOUT CERTAIN PRG INDIVIDUALS AND THE TREATMENT RECEIVED FROM THEM. THEY STATED THAT THEIR TRIP TO THE AREA WHERE THEY WERE CAPTURED HAD BEEN FOR A ROUTINE SHOWING OF THE FLAG AND AREA FAMILIARIZATION, AND ALSO TO CALL ON A FRENCH RUBBER PLANTATION MANAGER IN THE AREA. THEY HAD DISCUSSED THEIR TRIP WITH THEIR ICCS TEAM LEADER (HUNGARIAN CAPTAIN) PRIOR TO THEIR DEPARTURE AND THROUGH HIM HAD OBTAINED AN ICCS INTERPRETER.

2. ABOUT NOON, THEY CALLED ON FRENCH PLANTATION MANAGER WHO TOLD THEM THAT HIS SOURCES INDICATED PRG DID NOT BELIEVE THAT OFFICERS WHO HAD VISITED THIS SAME AREA IN EARLY MAY WERE REALLY ICCS OFFICIALS BUT RATHER AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE AGENTS. (PATTEN AND THOMPSON HAD VISITED THIS AREA BEFORE BUT IN EARLY APRIL.) JUST AFTER THIS CALL WHILE ON A ROAD GOING WEST THROUGH THE RUBBER PLANTATION (ROUTE 321) THEY SPOTTED THREE PRG CADRE TALKING WITH PLANTATION WORKERS. THEY STOPPED ABOUT 75 YARDS DOWN THE ROAD AND WALKED UP TO THE PRG CADRES. AT THIS POINT, PISTOL WAS PLACED AT THEIR HEADS AND 18 DAYS OF CAPTIVITY BEGAN.

3. THEIR CAPTORS TOLD THEM ALPRG HAD ORDERS TO APPREHEND ANY ICCS PERSONNEL ENTERING PRG TERRITORY. PRG REFUSED TO BELIEVE THEY WERE ICCS DESPITE THE MANY FORMS OF DOCUMENTATION THEY CARRIED. FOR THE NEXT 15 DAYS THEY SPENT NEARLY ALL THEIR TIME COVERING TWO PROVINCES ON FOOT. THEY MET ALL LEVELS OF PRG FROM PLATOON LEADERS TO A PROVINCE CHAIRMAN. PRG OBJECTIVE WAS APPARENTLY TO GET THEM TO SIGN STATEMENT THAT:

A. THEY HAD ENTERED PRG TERRITORY ILLEGALLY WITHOUT NOTICE, WITHOUT A PRG LIAISON OFFICER, AND WITHOUT THE OTHER PARTIES TO THE ICCS TEAM.

B. THEY HAD CERTAIN ARTICLES OF WAR IN THEIR POSSESSION, I.E. MAPS, COMPASS, CAMERAS, POCKET KNIVES, COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT AND A JEEP.

4. IT WAS STATED THAT IF THEY SIGNED THE ABOVE, PRG WOULD RECOGNIZE THEIR CLAIMED ICCS STATUS EVEN IF SPURIOUS AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 SAIGON 12814 170139Z

THEY WOULD BE RELEASED. AT ONE POINT THEY WERE MARCHED FOR EIGHT HOURS AND THEN SUBJECTED TO FIVE HOURS OF TALK TRYING TO CONVINCE THEM TO SIGN. ON ANOTHER OCCASION, CAPTAIN PATTEN SAW CAPTAIN THOMPSON WITH PEN IN HAND AND THINKING HE MIGHT SIGN SOMETHING CALLED OUT TO HIM. FOR THIS HE WAS TAKEN AWAY AND STRUCK WITH A RIFLE BUTT IN THE BACK. HE WAS KEPT BOUND FOR 1 AND 1/2 DAYS AFTER THE EPISODE. USUALLY THEIR HANDS WERE NOT BOUND, HOWEVER, THEY WERE ALWAYS BOUND

WHILE ON THE MOVE. THEY WERE FED AND HOUSED AS WELL AS THEIR CAPTORS, WHOSE SINCEREITY, PROFESSIONAL MILITARY ABILITY AND DISCIPLINE IMPRESSED THEM.

5. THE PRG CONTINUED THE PRESSURE FOR A "CONFESSION" EVEN AT THE RESCUE MEETING. THE CANADIANS REFUSED TO SIGN ANYTHING EXCEPT A RECEIPT FOR THE MEN AND THEIR EQUIPMENT.

6. THE OFFICERS LOOK WELL AND WERE IN GOOD SPIRITS.
APPLING

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